

Montana Height Modernization Strategic Plan Meeting Report

June 6, 2008 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM at Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) headquarters, Helena, Montana. *Phone-out conferencing provided by MDT.

Participants

____ Celinda Adair, State of Montana DNRC
* ____ Tony Bachman, USFS
____ Dave Davis, MDT
* ____ Todd Ferris, Inland GPS
____ Paul Ferry, MDT
____ Bryce Larsen, MDT
* ____ Steve Niday, Missoula County
____ Curt Smith, NGS
____ Greg Thurston, City of Kalispell
* ____ R.J. Zimmer, DJ&A

Guest

* ____ Michael Sweet, Research and Information Systems Specialist (GIS), College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana

General Agenda

1. CORS in Montana Status Report
2. Grant Proposal – Review, Status, and Direction
 - A. Grant Proposal Status
 - B. NOS/NGS Review and Requested Enhancements
 - C. General Discussion and Details Updates

Reports

Link to the MDT Web site for Montana Height Modernization to access Executive Committee meeting minutes and other information: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/heightmod.shtml>.

Montana CORS

Michael Sweet reported on the status of a proposed CORS sponsored by the University of Montana to be sited at Lubrecht Experimental Forest near the Forestry Center in the main camp area. It is not ideal, but is pretty good and Frank Maus, site manager, is willing to work with us on the installation and site modification. Mike will be going back up to Lubrecht this Friday to prepare a detailed site map and take photos. The next step after the initial site review is to conduct a 24-hour+ collection for quality review. If all of that works out, we'll start the formal process as well as the install.

Montana Height Modernization Program (MTHMP) Update

Overall National Height Modernization Program:

Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) funding , as directed by Congress, within the U.S. Department of Commerce budget for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Height Modernization Program was reported by National Geodetic Survey (NGS) in December 2007 as \$5 million in place of the previous (and expected) yearly funding of \$10 million for the program. Prior to the directed FY08 funding for a “Nationalized” Height Modernization Program, former Congressional earmark funds for Height Modernization, were the norm for the 13 states with existing programs.

Letter of Intent: by 4:00 pm EST on Thursday, January 10, 2008

A letter of intent (LOI) that an agency was intending to apply for a grant was requested through the Grants.gov Website. Bryce Larsen, Photogrammetry and Surveys, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), was instrumental in putting a LOI together and having it accepted. There were 18 states that successfully submitted a LOI for FY08 funds.

Grant Application: by 4:00 pm EST on Friday, February 8, 2008

Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/>) is your source to **FIND** and **APPLY** for federal government grants. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is proud to be the managing partner for Grants.gov, an initiative that is having an unparalleled impact on the grant community. Again, Bryce Larsen, MDT, was instrumental in working with his agency’s administration to develop and submit through the Grants.gov Web site the MTHMP grant proposal – **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number and Title: 11.400, Geodetic Surveys and Services (Geodesy and Applications of the National Geodetic Reference System); Funding Opportunity Number and Title: NO-NGS-2008-2001280, NOAA’s National Height Modernization Program.** There are 18 states competing for FY08 funds.

MTHMP original request for Year 1 funds was \$950,000.

Application Review and Renegotiations: by 4 pm EST on Tuesday March 11, 2008.

E-mail reply with comments: Thank you for your application in response to the National Ocean Service federal funding opportunity entitled "NOAA's National Height Modernization Program." The review team consisting of three independent outside reviewers selected by the NGS requested the State of Montana strengthen the outreach portion of their approach, and be more specific on the goals for the Height Modernization Program. The panel felt the application budget requested for the year one of the program was too aggressive and lacked budget detail. NGS recommends that we enter a cooperative agreement that would emphasize the development of a joint plan during the initial year of the effort. MTHMP renegotiated potential funds for Year 1 was \$75,000 in part mainly to the smaller than expected National Height Modernization Program budget and the increased number of states requesting funds.

With help and direction by the MTHMP Executive Committee, Bryce Larsen, MDT, submitted a revised MTHMP plan for Year 1 with updated request for funds that reflect the renegotiated \$75,000 grant and a focus to develop a position responsible to promote MTHMP and further develop a working plan for the program.

Revised Application Review: by 4:00 pm EDT on Friday, June 13, 2008

E-mail reply with comments: Upon review of this application the recipient's budget justification is completely inadequate. First the recipient needs to submit a signed revised 424 for the \$5,000,000 5 year program. I need a budget justification for each year showing: Personnel for each person funded on this grant - person name, annual salary, % time of work, # of months of work. Fringe for each person - % fringe, amount of money. Travel - person(s) traveling, # of trips, where they are traveling, purpose of travel, air fare, per diem, hotel, any other travel expense (car etc.). Equipment - breakdown of equipment, cost per unit, purpose of equipment, lease vs purchase analysis (why do they have to purchase it and not lease it). Supplies - breakdown of supplies, cost per unit, purpose of supplies. Contractual - work to be contracted, amount per subcontract, budget for subcontract (if over \$25,000). Was this contractual work obtained by competitive (bidding) process? Who is work going to (if known)?

With help and direction by the MTHMP Executive Committee, Bryce Larsen, MDT, submitted a revised MTHMP plan for Year 1 reflecting the renegotiated \$75,000 grant as well as detailed accounting (though not quite as stringent as requested) for the out years 2, 3, 4, and 5.

FY08 Funding:

Grants are expected to be awarded July 1, 2008. The MTHMP Year 1 plan describes working with the NGS to continue the development/refinement of the *Montana Height Modernization Plan* and, as funds allow, continue development on an outreach/education plan, conduct further research into establishing Montana Geodetic Reference Center and carry out other Montana height modernization projects.

The Future National Height Modernization Program:

It is currently expected by NGS that Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09) funding, as directed by Congress, for NOAA's National Height Modernization Program will be increased from the FY08 \$5 million – hopefully much more. NGS believes the increased request for Height Modernization funds by more states this year, FY08, and an expected further increase in states applying for FY09 funds will show Congress the urgent need for more Height Modernization directed funding.

Respectfully Submitted,

Curt Smith
Chair, MTHMP Executive Committee